

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

**Please add the following new heading and new paragraph after paragraph [008]:**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING:**

**[008.1]** Figure 1 illustrates the effect of bacterial inoculation regarding Ni uptake.

**Please replace paragraph [038] with the following amended paragraph:**

**[038]** Bacterial inoculation on Ni uptake by *A. murale* in sterilized and nonsterilized Ni-rich soils showed that *A. Murale* grown from seeds inoculated with enhancing-bacteria (for example, the bacteria was added to the surface of the seeds) extracted more nickel than seeds that were not inoculated. To study the effect of bacterial inoculation on Ni accumulation in plants grown in nonsterile soil, *S. macrogoltabidus*, *M. liquefaciens*, or *M. arabinogalactanolyticum* were added to surface sterilized *A. murale* seeds at the time of sowing. The addition of the bacteria to the seeds significantly increased the Ni uptake of *A. murale* by 17, 24, and 32%, respectively, compared with uninoculated seeds, as shown in Chart Figure 1. *Microbacterium arabinogalactanolyticum* increased foliar Ni from a control concentration of 8500 mg kg<sup>1</sup> to 12 000 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>. *Sphingomonas macrogoltabidus* increased Ni uptake into *Alyssum*, although to a lesser concentration as compared to the control, despite the finding that it actually decreased the

concentration of Ni extracted from soil. This demonstrates that plant bioavailability of Ni was affected in a way that did not always affect extraction with a weak acid.

**Please delete page 16 in its entirety.**

**Please replace paragraph [039] with the following amended paragraph:**

**[039]**        There were no significant effects on uptake when dead bacteria of each isolate were tested as shown in ~~Chart~~ Figure 1. Further, there were no significant effects of bacterial inoculation (dead or living) on shoot dry weight of *A. murale* (data not shown).